

Written Testimony of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society
SB 1070 AA Allowing Advance Practice Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants to Issue Home Health Orders
Public Health Committee – March 29, 2021

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the more than 200 orthopaedic surgeons of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on **SB 1070 AA Allowing Advance Practice Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants to Issue Home Health Orders**.

The Connecticut Orthopaedic Society contends that the inclusion of physician assistants in SB 1070 is not required or necessary. By State statute definition (Chapter 370; Section 20-12a (5)) "Physician assistant" means an individual who: (A) Functions in a dependent relationship with a physician licensed pursuant to this chapter; and (B) is licensed pursuant to section 20-12b to provide patient services under the supervision, control, responsibility and direction of said physician."

Therefore, if the supervising physician directs the physician assistant to write such an order, the order can be written by the physician assistant as stated in CT Statute Chapter 370; Section 20-12d (b)) "All orders written by a physician assistant shall be followed by the signature and the printed name of the physician assistant."

Similar to SB 1028, AAC Physician Assistants' Scope of Practice, previously heard by this Committee last week, there is no clear reason as to the need to make a multitude of statute revisions to accommodate a profession that already has a clearly defined scope of practice in state statute. Furthermore, these revisions proposed in both SB 1070 and SB 1028, if enacted, may construe an "independent practice" meaning in the statute.

We have similar concerns that the bill may permit advance practice registered nurses who had not yet met the requirements for independent practice in Connecticut to issue home health orders without supervision.

We also have significant concerns about allowing advance practice registered nurses and physician assistants from bordering states to issue home health orders without guarantees that they are not practicing beyond what their scope of practice would be if licensed for Connecticut. For example, if a bordering state granted physician assistants independent practice this bill would allow physician assistants licensed in the bordering state (or both that state and Connecticut) to supersede Connecticut statute and practice independently with respect to home health orders.

The orthopaedic community is concerned that this bill is being considered without a review by the State's Department of Public Health Scope of Practice Review process for the potential impact the proposed changes may have on patient safety. Our Society continues to support the need for a thorough review, careful consideration, and healthy dialogue provided by the DPH Scope of Practice Review process by all impacted parties in determining whether or not specific changes to scope are safe and appropriate.

The orthopaedic community respectfully requests a review of the bill and its impact on scope and asks the Committee to delay this bill until such time as the State of Connecticut's Department of Public Health Scope or Practice Review process can properly review.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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